

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Proposed drawing amendments are submitted with respect to Figures 1-3 of the drawings. We look forward to the Examiner's advice that the drawing amendments are acceptable. At that time we will submit replacement formal drawings incorporating these amendments.

REMARKS

A total of 31 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed October 4, 2006, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, claims 1 and 16 have been amended to more precisely define features of the present invention. In particular, claims 1 and 16 have been amended to define that the toggle function operates to “selectively map traffic between an intra-switch path mapped through the multi-stage switch fabric and a selected one of a set of any two of the plurality of channels”. This feature is clearly illustrated in original FIG. 3, and described in the accompanying description at paragraph 46. Clearly, no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- FIGs. 1-4 stand objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(o);
- claims 1-13 and 16-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/015968 (MacDonald) in view of United States Patent No. 5,436,886 (McGill); and
- claims 14, 15, 30 and 31 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As an initial matter, applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14, 15, 30 and 31. The Examiner's claim rejections are believed to be traversed by the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

Objections to the Drawings

At paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings "because all blocks in figures 1-4 should be labelled with descriptive legends". Accordingly replacement drawings of FIGs. 1-3 have been amended to provide descriptive legends, as required by the Examiner. Original FIG. 4 contained descriptive labelling, and thus has not been amended.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As noted above, claims 1 and 16 have been amended to emphasize that the toggle function operates to "selectively map traffic between an intra-switch path mapped through the multi-stage switch fabric and a selected one of a set of any two of the plurality of channels". As described in paragraphs 47-50, this arrangement provides an advantage that protection switching (between working and protection paths of the network) can be accomplished without requiring the intra-switch path to be re-mapped through the node. None of the known prior art references teaches or fairly suggests this operation, nor the advantages obtained thereby.

With particular reference to MacDonald, the redundancy and protection switches 125 and 142 are clearly external to the switch fabric 104, 108, 110 and operate to divert traffic from an input port 122a-d of one external stage switch element 122 to the protection port 140 of another external stage switch element 122. Clearly, since this protection switching function diverts traffic to a different external stage switch element 122, the intra-switch path through the switch fabric must necessarily be re-mapped before traffic flow can resume.

None of the other references provide the missing teaching. McGill teaches a system in which each port 12 (FIG. 1) is provided with redundant multiplexers AX0 and AX1 which operate to selectively route traffic to parallel switch fabrics 16. As in MacDonald, this operation is independent of the switch fabrics themselves, and thus the "toggle" function implemented in the multiplexers does not control the stage 1 switch elements, as required by claims 1 and 16.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in

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any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: December 28, 2006

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